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~~IA~~ Front Groups

In your recent editorial definition of the Central Intelligence Agency as standing outside the law in its capacity for endangering individual security with seeming impunity, you overlooked mention of the even vaster possibilities for similar type damage inherent in CIA front organizations designed to possess the obvious advantage of appearing to be unconnected with covert activities of official inspiration. In such situations, damage to individuals is far more insidious if for no other reason than the additional difficulty of dragging the responsible matrix organization into the publicity spotlight it must preferentially shun.

Composed of both agency operatives and "innocents" who are carefully recruited

for the timely exploitation of their professional skills to help mask other activities hardly in keeping with the publicly defined aims and objectives of their apparent employers, front organizations can be and too often are a serious menace to the individual liberties and working careers of their non-CIA affiliated employees. Many individuals of this last category would doubtless have opted not to join such organizations if their true nature had been manifest to them at the time they were recruited. Other individuals would have been just as content to go along with the acting role required of them and a not insignificant number would have felt happier about being taken into the complete confidence of those preparing to use them ostensibly in connection with national security interests and requirements.

The basic issue here—and it is but one more concerning which the American public is entitled to an answer—is whether or not the Central Intelligence Agency has any moral or legal basis for using and exploiting U.S. citizens, whether in the United States or abroad, without their prior knowledge and fullest consent in connection with covert activities while paying them for fulfilling legitimate roles the ultimate success of which are hardly ever allowed given their only secondary or tertiary importance in relation to the basic purpose of the matrix organization in setting up its dummy front.

Worse still in its long range implications, perhaps, is the damage done to the imagery of legitimate organizations in the labor, religious, charitable and other fields of overseas activities by CIA connections which may range from levels of complete control to that of continuing infiltration. It is suggested that a courageous professional investigation would certainly bring many surprises to light concerning the extent to which legitimate and well-intentioned private endeavors—not to mention those deliberately set up for such purposes—are being used in connection with supposed national security requirements and projections some of which at the least appear to be both badly conceived and all too often counterproductive in their consequences.

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